

THE HEAVENLY MANSIONS.

A

PREACHED MAY 14, 1795,

VOTED, That the Rev. Dr. Goodrich be desired to wait on the Rev.

Reverend EZRA STILES, D. D. LL. D.

PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE,

WHO DIED ON THE 12TH. OF THAT MONTH,

IN THE 68TH. YEAR OF HIS AGE,

AND 18TH. YEAR OF HIS PRESIDENCY.

BY JAMES DANA, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

PRINTED AT NEW-HAVEN, BY THOMAS AND SAMUEL GREEN.

THE HEAVENLY MANUSCRIPTS
At a Meeting of the President and Fel-
lows of Yale-College in New-Haven,
June 24th, 1795:

VOTED, That the Rev. Dr. GOOD-
RICH be desired to wait on the Rev.
Dr. DANA, and, in the Name of this Cor-
poration, request a Copy of the Sermon
which he delivered at the Interment of the
late President STILES, that it may be print-
ed.

A true Copy of Record,

Test, DAVID ELY, Scribe.

THE HEAVENLY MANSIONS.

J O H N, XIV. 2.

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MAN-
SIONS.—

THE disciples of our Lord were filled with sorrow, expecting his speedy removal from them. In this situation he used various arguments to establish and comfort their minds; and particularly that in the words read. His return to heaven was necessary in order to prepare a place for the disciples. He engaged to be present with them in spirit after his return, and at length receive them to be with him forever. These were considerations of great weight to restrain immoderate grief, guard against anxiety, and excite a lively faith. “Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me. *In my Father's house are many mansions*; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

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~~The only knowledge we have of the blissment~~
intended by many mansions in heaven is from the sacred oracles. It becomes us with humility to follow the guidance of these oracles on this subject.

Our Lord doubtless meant to express this sentiment, that there is a great *diversity* in the celestial recompences. He has told us that the reward of prophets and apostles, and of such as are persecuted for righteousness' sake, shall be *great in heaven*—that the servant whose pound gained ten, was advanced to *authority over ten cities*—the same as to be made *ruler over many things*. There are those who are *faithful in little*, and those who are *faithful in much*. “They that be wise shall shine as the
“brightness of the firmament; and they that turn
“many to righteousness, as the stars forever and
“ever. There is one glory of the sun, and another
“glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.
“One star differeth from another in glory. So also
“is the resurrection of the dead.” This distinction
of bliss, founded in the strength and eminence of
intellectual and moral attainments, can be no occasion
of pride, envy or discontent. These passions have
no place in heaven, into which nothing that defileth
can in any wise enter. In the participation of a di-
vine nature all the blessed are made meet for the
exercises and enjoyments of heaven. But as this
participation is in various measures, various mansions
are prepared for them. The Creator and Lord of
all, distributing to every one of his intelligent crea-
tures severally as HE will, their capacity and obli-
gations to improve are according to what they have
received. Different improvements will have a dif-
ferent reward.

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The Sovereign of the universe may surely do what he will with his own. Who hath first given to him, and made him a debtor? If wisdom and goodness require not that all should be made equal, can we not leave it with the giver of every good gift to select the particular objects who shall be made to differ from others? Variety is the beauty of the natural world. Why not of the intellectual and moral? Will you reply against God, because the intellectual capacity is imparted in various measures? because the advantages for it's cultivation are various? because various gifts of providence and grace are bestowed on different nations or ages? A like disparity of advantages among individuals living in the same age or nation is observable. Their particular advantages are almost infinitely various, owing to a different formation of body or mind, or both; or to difference of education or external circumstances. Shall we take up a complaint in behalf of the heathen, compared with whom we have received ten talents, while they have but one? or in behalf of those whose powers are comparatively weak, or whose circumstances are not so favorable for the improvement of the understanding or heart as are the circumstances of their neighbors?

Admitting that the present gifts of life and godliness are bestowed in great diversity, and that no reasonable objection lies against the Maker and Sovereign of the world on this account, we must also admit that a difference will take place hereafter answerable to the improvement of these gifts. To call this in question would be to deny, not only the scriptures, but the whole of God's moral government.

ment. He doth every thing in wisdom—unsearchable wisdom. Different dispensations of grace, different opportunities and proficiency under the same dispensation, with a great variety of circumstances, lead us to conclude that different mansions are prepared in heaven for persons of different attainments. Angels are unprofitable servants. The least in the kingdom of glory and the greatest will alike acknowledge their reward to be of grace. The faithful of all nations and ages will sit down with the patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs in the kingdom of God. For they all agree, in general, in a conformity to his moral perfections; and in heaven they will all have an immediate assurance of his special love. But in that world are mansions many in number, and various in dignity, according to the measure of every inhabitant.

Comparing great things with small, we may view heaven under the idea of a *royal palace*, in which are various apartments for the ministers and servants of the king. Those nearest him are most honored: Yet those in an humbler, lower place, being also faithful, are happy in the tokens of his regard.

Should some great personage invite different ranks to a feast, it would be no shame to the guests to whom the lowest room falls, that they are seated at his table according to their rank. Would they envy those who have the highest room? Or would *these* look on *those* with scorn?

The distinctions of this world, whether natural, civil or sacred, we do not suppose take place among the blessed: But many mansions in heaven may be

as fit as many orders and degrees on earth. The appetites and affections, relations and connexions of beings clothed with flesh will not follow us into the world of spirits. A common relation and likeness to the Mediator and to all his members will then continue and be improved. This alone connecteth glorified saints. But notwithstanding their common union with him, and consequently with each other, and the whole ransomed church, they have not all one mansion. In his Father's house are many mansions. They have not all one glory: There are various kinds and degrees of glory, according to the various advances in knowledge, purity and love.

The same prospects, amusements, conversation or business do not delight all, or not equally. From the different mansion in which the soul is here lodged, or from difference of education, or other circumstances, men view the objects of truth differently. Where there is equal capacity and probity, all the same truths are not admitted, at least not in the same sense, by different persons. Probably two persons cannot be named who perfectly agree in the perception and admission of religious truths.

It is also observable, that real Christians are distinguished for different graces. In some meekness may especially be conspicuous; in others, zeal; in others, fortitude; in others, charity. Tho' not destitute of the root or principle of any grace, yet some one may be most observed in this, another in that Christian; while some rare character may be eminent in most or all graces. We may here accommodate what the apostle saith with immediate refer-

ence to spiritual gifts, " All these worketh that one
 " and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man
 " severally as he will. Having gifts differing ac-
 " cording to the grace given us."

If then different prospects, amusements, society and employments correspond to the genius of different persons—if moral objects are viewed by them in a diversity of lights—if different graces shine in different Christians, and the same graces in different degrees, is there not occasion for various mansions in heaven? and may we not hence form some imperfect idea of them? The blessedness of that world is doubtless adapted to all the variety of temper and character in the inhabitants. This variety may display the manifold wisdom and abounding grace of God thro' eternal ages. All will be fully satisfied with the mansions assigned to themselves, and rejoice in those prepared for others—for saints or angels of every order or attainment. The happiness of every order and degree, and of the whole, will be the happiness of each one; and the happiness of each one will be participated by every order, and by the whole. A Being of infinite fulness cannot want means to make the bliss of all complete. Delighted with their own, all the different mansions of the blessed will, no doubt, ever have a lively sense of the unsearchable wisdom and overflowing goodness of God, in providing so great a number (we are not told how many) for the reception of his servants of every description and degree.

It appears from the scriptures, that death does not put good men into an immediate enjoyment of
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the full glories of immortality. This cannot be until *the redemption of the body*. The grace to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ is this, that they shall then be *like him, and see him as he is*. They look for him from heaven, to *change their vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*. Thus shall they *bear the image of the heavenly*. Thus when Christ shall appear, they *shall appear with him in glory*. But in regard to the possession of heavenly glory, even the morning of the resurrection may be as the day of their birth. For we may suppose a *progression* in their powers, perfection and bliss. This must be supposed of every order of angels. In the glories of immortality the just shall be perfect, not *absolutely*, but according to their measure, according to their rank in the scale of intelligences. Finite capacity, from its nature, must for ever admit of improvement. From hence, and from the progress of the divine life on earth, it seems reasonable to suppose, that the glories of the future world will gradually open on those who die in the Lord. At death they enter into the joy of their Lord. Thro' the intermediate state they may pass from glory to glory. The resurrection of the just will be *the redemption of the purchased possession*. From that day forward they may progress, and continue to shine more and more for ever. The kinds and degrees of glory in different saints, and of the same saint thro' all succeeding stages of future existence, may be infinitely various, if we may apply this word to finite subjects. One star differs from another in glory. The same comet shines with different degrees of splendor according

ding to its greater or lesser distance from the sun. By the laws of nature indeed, it comes within a certain nearness to the fountain of natural light, and then recedes. But glorified saints will for ever approach nearer and nearer to the fountain of intellectual light, and life, and joy.

Our entrance into the present world would be a state of amazement, were the powers of body and mind then complete. How long might it be before we could recover from the astonishment, and contemplate the objects round us ? or even our own frame. God hath so ordered our coming into this world, that the human intellect opens insensibly thro' the successive stages of infancy, childhood, youth, manhood. The first entrance of the saints into the world of spirits may, in some respects, answer to this. That world, in all its glory, may be too bright for a stranger, a new inhabitant, to behold at once. It may be necessary that his faculties should gradually expand, and *that* glory be gradually revealed. Death, while it transmits the faithful to scenes widely different from any which mortal eyes can behold, may not immediately give them the discernment of seraphs : It may rather be an advanced step in divine knowledge and enjoyment beyond what they experienced in this world, than beginning the life of heaven anew. They may pass into eternity, in some respect, as they advanced from one kind or degree of christian grace to another ; or as men pass from one region to another. Without supposing any satiety in the enjoyments of heaven, new accessions may constitute much of its bliss.

In

In one sense, the soul's first entrance into the joy of its Lord may be considered as a state of *manhood*. They there *see face to face*, and *know even as they are known*. They are immediately exempt from sin and temptation, sorrow and pain, from fears and doubts, from every misapprehension that can affect their duty or felicity. But, in another respect, the first commencement of the future happiness may be supposed to answer to our *birth*; and its after progress, to the succeeding stages of human life—except that there is no *decay* in that state: It is an advancement in knowledge, holiness and joy, without intermission or end.

The exercises and enjoyments of the blessed in heaven may be distinguished, in some sort, as are those of saints on earth. By various advances they reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. There are babes in Christ, as well as perfect men. The former, yet unskilful in the word of righteousness, cannot bear the same food, or admit the same instruction, as the latter. If the former have *laid the foundation*, the latter have *gone on to perfection*, and therefore have other communications and enjoyments. The former must be taught *first principles*, while the latter can admit the sublimer truths of religion, *the mysteries of the kingdom*. A difference similar to this may take place in the enjoyments and employments of saints in heaven. Different as are the amusements of childhood and manhood, so different may be the joys of heaven. This we infer from the declaration, *In my Father's house are many mansions*. Earthly connexions may
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be absorbed in an union with all just men made perfect, with innumerable hosts of angels, with Jesus the Mediator, and with God the Judge of all.

Those who sleep in Jesus, surrounded perhaps immediately by saints and angels, introduced to the presence of the King of glory, and to an intuitive view of HIM who dwelleth in light unapproachable by flesh and blood, must at once find, in a fellowship with such society, a *great* accession to their joy. The just now walk by *faith*; but hereafter it will be by *sight*. Now they are saved by hope; hereafter they shall possess the things hoped for—shall receive the end of their faith. They now love an unseen Savior: Believing in him they rejoice with joy unspeakable. What will the joy be, when they shall be present with him, to behold and partake of his glory? There is a wide difference between faith and vision.

The heir, while a child, tho' not possessed of the inheritance which his parent designeth for him, yet daily receives tokens of parental endearment, with assurances of greater when he shall arrive at full age. They who are born from above are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. As an *earnest* of this their inheritance, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, to attest their filiation and heirship. Hence they have joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope. This surpasseth all earthly joy, and is an anticipation of heaven. Still they cannot conceive what things are prepared for them that love God.

God. Their being heirs implies some resemblance of God, of whom they are begotten; some resemblance in holiness and happiness between saints on earth and in heaven. But what constitutes a great difference is, that saints in heaven *do always behold the face of their Father*, and *serve him day and night in his temple*. Saints on earth do not see heaven open. On this side Jordan, where is that eminence from which they may take a view of the heavenly Canaan, the land of promise? Some faint idea they may have of it, or they could not now be said to *know in part*. But when they shall enter into the promised rest, the ideas they now have of it may be forgotten. Upon visiting and residing in any place, the ideas formed of it before we saw it can no longer be of any use. Why take pains to retain or recover those ideas? Does an inhabitant of a country, one thoroly acquainted with it from having travelled over all parts of it, have recourse to a map of it? Shall the shadow of an object be embraced, when the object itself is before us? The artist's pencil portrays some esteemed friend: But could we see, converse with, and for ever enjoy that friend, what purpose would the picture answer?

Ignorant as we are how they know and are known in heaven, shall we undertake to conjecture what connexions and friendships are there formed? Shall we presume to say what new inlets of knowledge they have, and what their employments may be? Shall we attempt to explain the difference between *that which is in part*, and *that which is perfect*? As well may a child assume the understanding of a man. We think and speak only as children on subjects

subjects so much above us. From observing the mistakes and ignorance of children in the things of this life, we should be led to see and acknowledge our own in regard to the things of heaven.

Various and spacious as the heavenly mansions are, no doubt an harmonious, joyful intercourse is kept up among them. All are represented as sitting down together in the kingdom of God—uniting in the worship of HIM that sitteth on the throne, and of the Lamb. The heavenly Jerusalem, like the earthly, *is a city that is compact together*. It is an entertaining sight to see families and societies dwell together in unity. What must be the union of that world where they are *made perfect in love*?

All the mansions in heaven will forever enjoy the glorious presence of the REDEEMER. They are mansions which he hath prepared for his people. Where he is they shall be also. He will receive them to himself. They shall see him as he is. They shall reign with him forever and ever.

As the mansions spoken of are in his FATHER'S house, it follows that the servants of Christ shall enjoy not only his presence, but his Father's also, to whom he is returned. He will present them without spot, as the purchase of his blood. His Father's name shall be in their foreheads. The blessedness of heaven is represented by *seeing God*.

Many mansions in heaven may constitute order, beauty and happiness, as subordinations and distinctions do in civil societies. God doubtless appears there as a God of order.

Should

Should we have admission to those mansions, our present want of charity may, not improbably, be corrected by finding many there whom we had consigned to the regions of darkness. Do the scriptures exclude from the heavenly mansions all the heathen world? "In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Are we sure that there are none of this character among the heathen? If the heathen are saved, it must indeed be by the Redeemer. And are we warranted to say that none of them can be saved by him? Is it altogether unscriptural to suppose that virtuous heathen and sincere Christians may be assigned to different heavenly mansions? the latter being distinguished, because of their knowledge and profession of Jesus Christ. He that improved five talents well was advanced to greater dignity than he that improved two. "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." The Judge of the world searcheth the reins and hearts. He may discern prevailing integrity in many who are pronounced vessels of wrath by man's judgment. Indulging jealousies and uncharitable sentiments of others, because they do not embrace our opinions, is to act the part of children, who quarrel on the most trivial occasions. Soured by childish controversy, or thro' prejudices of education, custom or particular connections, professors have been prone to denounce those as the foes of God who are differently persuaded from themselves.

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Those *who are strong*, who have an improved, mature understanding in religion, should *bear the infirmities of the weak*. This is to imitate the author of our faith, who hath compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way. Or if we have no compassion on the ignorance and infirmities of our fellow-servants, on what grounds do we expect that the Judge will have compassion on ours? Should the elucidations of the great day discover that we have condemned those whom the Lord the righteous Judge approves, how shall we answer for our rash judgment of them?

We have supposed that there is a difference in the happiness of glorified saints, conformable to the diversity of their capacities and improvements. We have offered various illustrations of this sentiment. And from the present solemnity, as we apprehend, a very pertinent illustration of the same sentiment might be adduced. But it must all along be remembered, that when we would exemplify the things of the world above by those of earth, every example must fall far short. Nor will any comparison apply in all particulars or circumstances. Yet HE who descended from heaven, and is ascended, hath taught us to form our ideas of the things of heaven by referring us to objects with which we are daily conversant, and to various employments in human life. Far from thinking that the best illustrations of our subject have been selected, we only hope that it has not been degraded by a feeble attempt to illustrate it—that at least we may be exempted from the imputation of rashness in the imperfect hints we have offered.

But

But one further observation shall be added under this part of the discourse—an observation immediately connected with what was last said. Should we, my brethren, reach the joyful mansions in heaven, doubtless the glory will so far transcend our highest and worthiest present conceptions, that we shall proclaim with admiration and rapture, "*The one half was not told me.*" I had heard and believed that a God of boundless grace, my covenant God in Christ, had prepared great things for them that love him. I now realize what eye could not see, nor heart imagine. I wish and can enjoy no more. This is the end of my faith. This is heaven. Blessed are these my fellow-servants redeemed from among men, who stand continually before God and the Lamb, and cast their crowns before the throne. I have waited and longed for these mansions. O my soul, this is thy rest for ever." And suddenly the ravished soul will join kindred spirits in that song, "Blessing, honor, glory and power to HIM that liveth for ever and ever, and to the Lamb that was slain." To such society who of us doth not wish to be for ever united?

As the IMPROVEMENT of the subject, we are reminded, first, of our immense obligations to the Redeemer of the world. Such was his friendship, that he came down from the excellent glory, was made flesh, and gave his life a ransom for a world which had forfeited the hopes of heaven, and deserved to be thrust down to hell. Having made reconciliation for iniquity by his cross, he loosed the

bands

bands of death, and took possession of the glory he had with the Father before the world was. That the Father is well pleased in him as our Mediator is manifest from his resurrection and the gifts of the Spirit after his ascension. The government of the church and world is given him as the reward of his humiliation. The retributions of eternity are at his disposal: He hath opened the gates of immortality. He hath the words of eternal life. We may with the fullest confidence commit our souls to him. To whom else shall we go for rest? His unexampled friendship, the hopes to which he hath raised us, claim our highest gratitude and praise. No possible obligations to an human benefactor may compare with those which the whole human race are under to HIM. "Tho' he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor; that we thro' his poverty might be rich. The love of Christ constraineth us." May it dwell on our hearts and tongues.

Secondly, the expectation of an eternal residence with all the friends of Jesus is just matter of joy to the true Christian. Many such, already gone to the Father, he has known in the flesh. Perhaps they were dear to him in the bonds of nature, or other tender bonds; but especially were they dear considered as belonging to *the household of faith*. The expectation of meeting these in heaven, to be parted from them no more for ever—meeting them in the company of all just men, and of angels of every order, may well afford a joy not unlike that from the testimony of conscience to his own sincerity. The followers of the Lamb *take sweet counsel together*

on earth. They *assemble to provoke one another to love and good works*, and as a mean of *holding fast their profession*. How will their pleasure in each other's society be improved and exalted in heaven? Nothing will there interrupt the communion or allay the joy of the saints; but every thing co-operate to heighten the same. Seeking the advancement of the Christian cause, they look forward with delight to the time when that cause shall universally prevail. They look for the blessed hope and glorious appearance of their Lord. Then they shall be united to the company in heaven, who with one heart and voice celebrate redemption, and rest not day and night from the employment. *The ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.* The worship and song of saints and angels will be one from all the mansions in heaven, how many and different soever the states of felicity according to their progress in holiness. It must be left to the elucidations of eternity to explain in what services they are employed, and what the place of every order in heaven.

The joy of saints in *that* world may be heightened by knowing those with whom they had the nearest friendship in *this*. The endearments of the present state, its sufferings, temptations and dangers, the work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope, and mutual joy in the Lord, may be hereafter recollected with pleasure. The mariner enjoys gentle gales more sensibly after a tempest. Having reached his port, the recollection of his toils and dangers endears the more to him his secure retreat, a milder sky, and the connexions whom he most values.

values. They congratulate his arrival. The joy is mutual that he hath stood out the storm, and brought in his precious cargo without loss. May not a remembrance of the tribulation and hazards, thro' which the saints enter into the kingdom of glory, be a source of joy in that world? It may be a motive to perseverance and eminence in religion on earth, if good men have a prospect of knowing those in heaven, whose souls are congenial with their own—whether those who are already entered into rest; or those whom they still number among their choicest living friends. The mind dwells on this sentiment with pleasure: It is part of the consolation when Christian friends are removed. The sentiment contradicts no declaration of scripture: Various scriptures appear to countenance it. The apostles saw and knew Moses and Elias on the mount of transfiguration; and the transfiguration was an emblem of the resurrection state. In that state all the followers of Jesus shall see HIM as he is. May they not see *each other* in like manner? They see and know as they are seen and known. Those who shall be thrust out of the kingdom will, with pain and anguish, see in that kingdom Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets, with others. Dives in hell saw Abraham and Lazarus in heaven. What forbids then, that the saints in glory should recognize, with lively joy, those whom they esteemed the excellent of the earth? CICERO consoled himself with the expectation of ascending to his friend CATO. May not a Christian cherish a thought which affords present consolation, may animate him in his course, and also be a source of future bliss?

Further,

Further, while our Lord assured the disciples of mansions in his Father's house, he forewarned them of *tribulation in the world*. He taught them to take up their cross and follow him, and "Ye shall drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized." His declaration, "I appoint unto you a kingdom," is connected with this testimony to their unshaken faith and love, *Ye have continued with me in my temptation*. Having overcome in all his temptations, he knoweth how to comfort and succor them that are tempted. All their conflicts are ordered by a God reconciled to them in Christ. Having prepared mansions for them, their Redeemer will with every temptation make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it. Their severest conflicts are designed and calculated to refine their graces, to cure their depravity, to brighten their evidences, and prepare them to unite with those before the throne who came out of great tribulation. Shall the disciples of Jesus murmur or repine, because their earthly hopes are not fulfilled? Shall they be impatient or discouraged in any affliction? Shall they be moved, we say not by *persecution*, but by *common trials*? Shall they declare their disbelief of the glory to be revealed? or the weakness of their faith by its transient influence? *We count them happy that endure*. Is there all fulness in Christ? And can he not recompense any outward losses an hundred fold, even in the present time? Are pious friends removed? It is matter of joy that they are gone to the Father. The disciples, after their dear Lord was taken from them into heaven, were not left comfortless. In all

all times and circumstances faith and hope bear up the Christian. Let those who are sorrowing most of all that they shall no more see their dearest earthly connexions and Christian friends, comfort themselves with such reflections as we have mentioned, and others which the subject suggests. Let them abide in the faith, and patiently continue in well doing, seeking for glory, honor and immortality.

We shall hold the servants of Christ in reputation, if we honor him. We cannot honor him in person, but may in his members. This is one mean of training up for the mansions prepared for the faithful. Those who shine as lights in the world, holding forth the lamp of science and the word of life, who are distinguished also by a rare assemblage of virtues, are worthy of double honor while they live ; and their memory shall be blessed on earth after they are ascended to heaven.

Such was the character whose funeral solemnities we are attending, and who, as we believe, is now united to the blessed society who *shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*.

MY BRETHREN,

A great and good man is fallen. It is extremely difficult, on various accounts, for me to fulfil the duty to which this solemnity calls me. It is with much diffidence that I can attempt a very imperfect portrait of so learned and pious a person. Let me have your utmost candor while, amidst the sorrow visible in every countenance, joined to the tide of affection in my own breast, I endeavor to proceed.

PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT STILES was born at North-Haven, November 29, 1727, O. S. He was the son of the Reverend Isaac Stiles of that town; and the only child of his mother, Mrs. Kezia Taylor, daughter of the Reverend Edward Taylor of Westfield, who was graduated at Harvard-College A.D. 1671. His mother died the fourth day from his birth, in her 26th year.

The President was graduated at Yale-College in 1746. In the year 1749 he was called to the office of a tutor in the college, in which station he continued six years.

Endowed with strong mental powers, and uniting a vivid imagination with a persevering attachment to literary pursuits, he was distinguished by his taste for elegant literature, and his skill in the most abstruse parts of science. With a great and comprehensive genius, highly cultivated and improved by education, he became one of the first scholars in our university. Possessing an happy talent as an instructor, he was eminently useful in embuing the minds of youth with science, and with noble and virtuous principles. His eloquence and oratory improved the taste of the students. By thirteen years' residence at the university, from the time of his admission as a member till he resigned the tutorship, he laid the foundation of his celebrity. Of those who were trained up under his tuition, numbers of the worthiest characters now living remember him with peculiar affection and esteem.

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He commenced a preacher in 1749. Thro' want of health, and for other reasons, he declined several invitations to settle as a congregational minister. He also received generous proposals from two episcopal societies in maritime and populous towns. But he was, upon enquiry and principle, convinced of the validity of presbyterian ordination, and attached to the congregational mode. In 1752 he had almost given up the tho't of the ministry as a profession, applied to the study of jurisprudence, and, the following year, took the oath of attorney at law.

Invited in 1755 to the pastoral care of a congregational church at Newport, Rhode-Island, the advice and importunity of his friends, concurring with the unanimity and warm attachment of that people, prevailed with him to accept the invitation, and he was ordained the 22nd of October the same year.

Formed for elevation in life, he was placed in situations adapted to his genius and the display of his talents. His avidity for the acquisition of universal science was favored by access at all times to a valuable public library at Newport. From his first settlement in the ministry he continually added to the treasures of wisdom accumulated by a long residence at the seat of literature. Slender as his constitution was, his application to all wisdom was unremitting. Tho' credulous in some points of antiquity, he yet examined subjects of importance with the strictest scrutiny and impartiality.

partiality. With the scope he gave to his own rare genius, aided by much reading, conversation and correspondence, he shone with increasing lustre.

As a theologian, *Ezra the priest was a perfect scribe of the law of the God of heaven, after the wisdom of God in him.* Preparing his heart to do and teach the law of his God, he was eloquent, and mighty in the scriptures; both a burning and a shining light. Tho' no man could have made greater display of literature in his sermons, he yet used none of these things. Instead of aiming at excellency of speech, or a philosophical discussion of religious subjects, he was a plain, practical, pungent preacher of the gospel of the grace of God. He taught, not only in public, but "from house to house; warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that he might present every man perfect in Christ." He was a warm advocate for the divinity and atonement of Christ, and the doctrines of grace connected therewith.

He carefully examined the scriptures in the original languages, and gave particular attention to the prophecies. From a thorough disquisition of the proofs of Christianity, and a fair examination of all the principal writers against it, he was established in the belief of it beyond a doubt. The laudable pains and judicious course he took, in early life, to remove sceptical doubts, are highly deserving of imitation in a like situation.

Fully

Fully acquainted with the controversies in the Christian church, he excelled in candor and charity to all denominations.

By the events of the war his flock was scattered in 1775. He continued to minister to a remnant of them till March 1776, when he removed to Dighton. With a numerous family he was cast on the wide world ; but was not suffered to remain inactive. After preaching to several vacant congregations in the neighborhood of Newport, and occasionally visiting the residue of his flock in that town, he removed with his family to Portsmouth in May 1777, upon an invitation from the first congregational church. That church would gladly have stipulated for his continuance with them. But the thought of his relation to his dispersed flock, and the hope of their being regathered when the troubles of war should be over, prevented his accepting repeated offers of a permanent settlement. No minister could be more beloved and honored than he was by the people of his pastoral charge. He naturally cared for their state.

September 11, 1777, the corporation of Yale-College chose him President, and found that the public voice coincided with their own. His letter of acceptance bears date March 20, 1778. The 18th of the same month he gave a negative answer to the unanimous call of the church and congregation at Portsmouth, and on the 19th sent his resignation of the pastoral office at Newport. Arriving at New-Haven June 20, 1778, he took the

the care of the college. On the 8th of July following he was installed in the office of President, and at the same time chosen and constituted professor of ecclesiastical history. His inaugural oration is a specimen of his literary merit. He continued in the Presidency till his death.

There is not a more arduous office, or one that requires greater vigilance, or to which an universal acquaintance with literature and mankind is more necessary, or in which every qualification that constitutes the gentleman, scholar and Christian is more requisite.

From the time that President Stiles entered on his office, every part of instruction was easy to him. With the various branches of natural philosophy he was thoroughly conversant. From astronomy, his favorite science, he formed the sublimest conceptions of the majesty, wisdom and providence of God. The classical writers were his familiar companions. In his extensive acquaintance with history he possessed a rich fund of instruction. Few persons of literary eminence equalled him in the knowledge of the oriental languages. With talents to encourage the diffident and awe the refractory, to conciliate, to persuade and command, he seemed to be pointed out by providence to preside over the votaries of literature. At the annual commencements he appeared with a peculiar dignity.

No man could have conducted the affairs of college with greater prudence, judgment and fidelity,

ity, or have more advanced the interests of literature, or have given greater satisfaction to the students, the corporation, or the public, than President Stiles. By his wise conduct, firmness in support of government, and attention to the best interests of his pupils, he raised the character of the university.

Strictly attentive to the duties of his office, he yet seemed insensible to his literary superiority; and in his intercourse with society displayed the polished urbanity of the gentleman. Acknowledged eminence in the republic of letters introduced him to an extensive circle of correspondents in the old and new world, and gave him peculiar advantages for promoting the interests of science. He was a member of the most respectable philosophical societies in America, and received the first honors of the principal universities in the United States and in Great-Britain.

He was a gentleman of distinguished sensibility, humility and integrity, catholicism and philanthropy. His passions, tho' originally strong, were under the best command. He abounded in charity and alms. He was a warm friend of civil and religious liberty.

His life was a precious comment on those great principles of moral and religious truth which it was his delight to study and inculcate. His faith and piety were as eminent as his science. His private memoirs express an heart impressed with lively sensations of the reality, excellence and infinite

nite importance of religion. A life full of action and usefulness, devoted to the glory of God and good of mankind, was closed with calmness, resignation, and hope in the merits of the Redeemer. *

The ministry lament one who was their brightest ornament.

The churches lament the truest friend of their religious order, whose gifts gladdened the city of God.

The state and nation lament the friend of their rights.

The friends of science and liberty, of candor, of their country and mankind lament the loss to the world.

The family sustain the greatest worldly loss, and peculiarly call for our sympathy. But they cannot wish that their head, however esteemed and honored, however important to them, should return to this world from the mansions to which he hath ascended. Pursuing the heavenly road as he did, they shall be with him forever.

You,

* Succession in the Presidency of Yale College.

- I. Reverend ABRAHAM PIERSON, from 1701 to 1707.
- II. Reverend TIMOTHY CUTLER, D. D. 1719, ——— 1722.
- III. Reverend ELISHA WILLIAMS, 1726, ——— 1739.
- IV. Reverend THOMAS CLAP, 1739, ——— 1766.
- V. Reverend NAPHTALI DAGGETT, D. D. 1766, ——— 1777.
- VI. Reverend EZRA STILES, D. D. LL. D. 1777, ——— 1795.
- VII. Reverend TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D. D. President elect, 1795.

You, Madam, believe in God, and also in Christ. He sees your tears, and can turn them into joy. Cast all your cares upon him, and make his will your own. Endeavor after a greater disengagement from earth, a greater familiarity with heaven. Follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Especially look to HIM, who for the joy set before him endured the cross. May tribulation work patience ; patience, experience ; and experience, hope. The Lord bless you and keep you, and give you peace always by all means.

The children have lost the best of earthly parents. It is their honor that their father was so distinguished and useful in his day. It will be a greater honor to walk in his steps. This will be their wisdom for time and eternity. They well know that their estimation in life depends not on the merit of their father, but on their own conduct. He offered up constant, fervent prayers for them. He was faithful to counsel and warn them with all parental tenderness and concern. He set the brightest example, while he went in and out before them. Great was his solicitude that they might be wise, virtuous and useful. May the God of their father be their God, and a double portion of his excellent spirit rest upon them. May they be respected for his sake. Says a sacred writer, *I have been young; and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* May the children who are absent be prepared for the heavy tidings. May those present be prepared

prepared for such tidings as may await them from the absent. We humbly beseech the Father of the fatherless, for the present and absent, that he would never leave nor forsake them: May they all know and honor the God of their father, in the assurance that he will raise them up friends. They have every reason to rise up and call their father blessed. He gave them good doctrine. May his instruction be written on the table of their hearts. May they follow him even as he followed Christ, that they may meet him in the heavenly mansions.

The occasion reminds me and my brethren in the ministry, that we must shortly give account of our stewardship—those of us especially who are walking down the vale of life. We have all lost our ablest friend and counsellor. May the spirit of wisdom, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord rest upon us. And may we be faithful unto death.

Well may the students of the university, viewing him afar off who lately presided over it with superior dignity and advantage, cry after him, as Elisha after Elijah, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* The removal of their excellent President is an instruction to them to continue in the things they have heard and learnt from him. From early youth to old age he was assiduous in collecting useful knowledge from every source. While he went in and out before them, he spared no endeavors in bringing out of his treasures of wisdom such portions

of it as they were either inclined or able to receive. All of them have the greatest reason to revere his memory and deplore their loss. His unwearied attempts that they might be learned in all the branches of an university education, his paternal care of their morals, his example which exhibited the beauty of virtue, will, we hope, have indelible impressions on their minds. While they call to mind the bright example they have had before them, and their advantages under his tuition, may they be emulous to form themselves on such a pattern. They will then diligently apply to all wisdom, that they may be the ornaments of literature, the boast of their country, and the light of the world. Their care will be, during their residence at the university, to lay so good a foundation against the time to come, that the just hopes of their parents and friends, their people and mankind, may be answered, in the future eminence of their acquisitions, station, usefulness and virtue; and that, by a distinguished faith and piety, they may be training up for superior mansions in heaven. May divine grace give them an heart to improve the price now in their hands. May they improve the subject and occasion as motives early to acquire and excel in the whole assemblage of virtues, personal and social, divine and christian. The mansions of which the gospel assures them deservedly claim the exertion of all their powers, that they may reach the highest perfection in the knowledge and love of God, and of Jesus Christ. **THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL.** The nearer their conformity

conformity to him who hath prepared the mansions above, and who while on earth went about doing good, the better qualified will they be to spread the savor of his knowledge, the more good will they do in their lives, and the higher will they "rise in salvation and the climes of bliss." Every sentiment of ingenuity and gratitude, of glory and honor, conspire to enforce on them the advice of an apostle: "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time." To whomsoever much is committed, of them is much required.

An early entrance on and diligence in the christian life are necessary to an eminence in it. May it be the main concern of all our youth, that from the morning of life their path may shine more and more unto the perfect day. The pleasures of this path of the just will increase as they advance in it. A life early devoted to God affords a joy superior beyond comparison to the delights of the sons of men. The end of such a life is peace and fulness of joy. Would to God that the rising generation may feel the full influence of the Savior's words, In my Father's house are many mansions. They would not then be conformed to the principles and manners of a degenerate age, but transformed by the renewing of their minds. Life and immortality are brought to light. Every one that has this hope is comparatively indifferent to things seen and temporal. His conversation is in heaven. Ardent earthly wishes and pursuits ill become the heirs of immortality. Such hopes generally meet with

with a check. The way of life is above to the wife. The same scriptures which declare that there are mansions prepared in heaven for the wise and faithful, also declare that at the appearance of Jesus Christ to render a reward to his servants, opposite characters shall be separated. "He will come to be glorified and admired in his saints;" but will "be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that disobey the gospel." To the former he will say in that day, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.* To the latter, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

To conclude the discourse. The satisfactions of one who is settled among his kindred and friends far excel those of a foreigner, remote from his dearest connexions. In a strange land the foreigner is thankful for any accommodations or civilities, and submits to many inconveniences. His heart being on his native country, his friends and family, he is diligent to accomplish his business and settle his affairs abroad. On his journey home, if he turns aside, it is only to tarry for a night. He may be pleased with some prospects and entertainments in the country thro' which he passeth, but does not wish to take up his residence among strangers. In pursuing his journey, he is often delighted with the expectation of meeting, and taking up his abode with, those who are most endeared to him. What mutual congratulations on his arrival! The longer his absence, the more he has endured abroad, the higher the satisfaction at his journey's end.

He

He rehearses his toils and sufferings, dangers and escapes. He felicitates himself, and rejoices his friends, that they are met to part no more. The good man, while in the body, views himself as absent from home, because absent from the Lord, to whom he is united in bonds much nearer than earthly—Absent also from his pious acquaintances, who are entered into rest—absent from the whole family in heaven. He is thankful for any of the enjoyments of life ; but more for the good work begun in him, and the earnest of the Spirit. He lives by faith of joys in reversion. He takes heed lest his earthly alliances and attachments should retard him in his Christian course. He does not forget that he is a stranger and foreigner. With his face toward heaven, desiring that better country, staying his soul on the promises in Christ, he pursues till he has finished his course. As he approaches the confines of his native sky, he feels the attraction ; not knowing, however, what he shall see and enjoy, but content that he soon shall know. Saints and angels welcome him to the heavenly mansions. The Lord of angels presents him faultless before his Father, and assigns him his place in heaven, the place prepared for him.

May we all be training up for the mansions above. Innumerable multitudes of ransomed souls are there with palms in their hands. With these all angels join, saying, *Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. AMEN.*

THE soul of man was made to walk the skies;
—Happy day! that breaks our chain;
That manumits; that calls from exile home;
And re-admits us, thro' the guardian hand
Of older brothers, to our Father's throne.

But how great
To mingle int'rests, converse, amities,
With all the sons of reason, scatter'd wide
Thro' habitable space, wher-ever born,
Howe'er endow'd! to live free citizens
Of universal nature! to lay hold,
By more than feeble faith, on the Supreme!

—TO RISE IN SCIENCE AS IN BLISS,
INITIATE IN THE SECRETS OF THE SKIES.
TO READ CREATION, READ ITS MIGHTY PLAN
IN THE BARE BOSOM OF THE DEITY.
No mystery—but that of love divine,
Which lifts us on the seraph's flaming wing
From darkness, and from dust, to such a scene.
A banquet, this, where men and angels meet,
Eat the same manna, mingle earth and heaven."

"Say, ye who best can tell, ye happy few,
Who saw him in the softest lights of life,
All withheld, indulging to his friends
The vast unborrow'd treasures of his mind,
Oh, speak the wondrous man! how mild, how calm,
How greatly humble, how divinely good,
How firm establish'd on eternal truth;
Pervent in doing well, with every nerve
Still pressing on, forgetful of the past,
And panting for perfection; far above
Those little cares, and visionary joys,
That so perplex the fond impassion'd heart
Of ever-cheated, ever-trusting man.

Forgive, immortal shade! if aught from earth,
From dust low warbled, to those groves can rise,
Where flows celestial harmony, forgive
This fond superfluous verse. With deep felt voice,
On every heart impress'd, thy deeds themselves
Attest thy praise. Thy praise the widow's sighs,
And orphan's tears embalm. The good, the bad,
Conspire to swell thy spotless fame to heaven.
Glad heaven receives it, and seraphic lyres
With songs of triumph thy arrival hail."